

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 13MN3**

	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Title 1</b>	<b>Magnet</b>	<b>Choice</b>
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mrs. Allyson Kuehn PhD

Official School Name: Bendix Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 655 Park Street East  
Annandale, MN 55302-0190

County: Wright County State School Code Number\*: 001

Telephone: (320) 274-8218 E-mail: akuehn@annandale.k12.mn.us

Fax: (320) 274-8470 Web site/URL: http://www.annandale.k12.mn.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Steve Niklaus Superintendent e-mail: sniklaus@annandale.k12.mn.us

District Name: Annandale Public Schools District Phone: (320) 274-5602

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Jeanette Rieger-Borer

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district    1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
    1 Middle/Junior high schools  
    1 High schools  
    0 K-12 schools  
    3 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure:    9379

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:    Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school:    10
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	65	62	127
1	62	70	132
2	63	61	124
3	62	60	122
4	53	59	112
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			617

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
2 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
96 % White  
0 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 3%  
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	12
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	4
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	16
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	617
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 2%  
Total number of ELL students in the school: 12  
Number of non-English languages represented: 3  
Specify non-English languages:

Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32%

Total number of students who qualify: 22

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 15%

Total number of students served: 93

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>9</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>46</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>8</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u><b>Full-Time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>27</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>70</u>	<u>12</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

23:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	95%	96%	94%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university \_\_\_\_\_%

Enrolled in a community college \_\_\_\_\_%

Enrolled in vocational training \_\_\_\_\_%

Found employment \_\_\_\_\_%

Military service \_\_\_\_\_%

Other \_\_\_\_\_%

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Bendix Elementary School is located in Annandale, a community of roughly 3,000 in central Minnesota. The school is named after a former physician and long term school board member in the community. Bendix Elementary School serves just over 600 students in preschool through fourth grade.

Our mission statement reads, “Bendix Elementary School is committed to a rich and challenging tradition of excellence, where every decision is made with the students' best interest in mind. With a partnership of parents, staff, and students, we are dedicated to making a positive and dynamic impact on our world. At Bendix Elementary School all students are empowered to achieve success.”

In 2011, Bendix Elementary School was endorsed as a Minnesota School of Excellence for exhibiting strong alignment with national standards in leadership, vision, student learning, the culture of adult learning, data and decision-making, and community engagement. In 2008, Bendix Elementary School was awarded the MAEF (Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation) School Spotlight Award for demonstrating academic excellence and evidence of significant gains in student achievement. Research shows that the greatest school factor in increasing student achievement is quality instruction. The teaching and support staff at Bendix Elementary School display the highest level of instructional excellence. Data driven decision making, research based strategies, and differentiated instruction are not merely trendy terms used in conversation, they are the core principles of pedagogy evident in each classroom. For example, it is quite common to observe a teacher conferring with individual students on a specific skill or meeting with a small group of like-skilled students in order to scaffold their learning while the remaining students are engaged in purposeful reading at their independent reading levels.

In the words of an experienced Bendix Elementary teacher, “We want every child that walks through the doors to reach his potential.” School staff members are dedicated to academic growth for every child each year they are in school. Teachers systematically monitor student learning through formative assessments and respond immediately to students who experience difficulty. Students not meeting grade level expectations are supported by services provided by Title 1 instructors led by the school’s Response to Intervention (RtI) Coach. In addition, a Gifted Coordinator provides teacher resources and student services for the high achieving students.

Positive family-school relationships are integral to the success of students at Bendix Elementary School. An example of a unified effort is our Razzle Dazzle Reading program. School staff designated a specific amount of at-home reading that students at each grade level should complete. The weekly expectations start at 10 books per week in kindergarten and increases to 90 minutes per week in fourth grade. Parents are asked to document the amount of at-home reading each night. The school goal is that 80% of the elementary students will meet their at-home reading expectation. During the 2011-2012 school year, the goal was met every month! In fact, 90% of the student body met their at-home reading goal every week of the school year.

Technology has greatly enhanced our students’ educational experience at Bendix Elementary School. Each classroom has a SMART board (interactive whiteboard) that is used as an instructional tool. The elementary has three computer labs and multiple iPad carts available to check-out. Effective use of technology has shown to increase student motivation and engagement while providing for more hands-on and differentiated learning experiences. For example, fourth graders studying geometry are able to manipulate the numbers of sides, vertices, and the size of angles when using the SMART board.

Unique to Bendix Elementary School is the transformation in school culture that has elicited high student academic achievement. Nine years ago, Bendix Elementary was below the state average in proficiency on the math Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA). Today, student MCA results place Bendix

Elementary in the top 10% in the state. Bendix Elementary School functions as a professional learning community. Scheduled grade level and cross grade level collaboration includes teachers observing lessons of their peers, discussing teaching points, reviewing student work, and collectively sharing intervention ideas designed to increase student achievement.



## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Bendix Elementary School students are administered the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in math and reading in the spring of third and fourth grade. The MCA is aligned with the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading and the Minnesota Academic Standards in Math. Students score in one of four categories – does not meet proficiency, partially meets proficiency, meets proficiency, and exceeds proficiency. Media publications focus on the percentage of students meeting and exceeding proficiency at each grade level, as a school, and as a district. In addition to an overall proficiency score, each fourth grade student receives a growth rating in one of three categories – low, medium, and high. Growth is measured by the increase in achievement from third grade MCA to fourth grade MCA. Our elementary goal is for all students to be proficient or exceed proficiency on the MCA and attain medium or high growth. Bendix Elementary School MCA results can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/index.html>.

#### Math

The data tables contain MCA results for Bendix Elementary third and fourth grade students. The trend data shows a consistent level of exceptionally high student achievement. In the 2007-2008 school year 91.1% of the students were proficient. Consecutive years' results were 93.75% , 91.6%, and 90.1% proficient. In school year 2011-2012, 94.45% of the students scored at the proficient or exceeds proficiency level. The most significant gains were documented in the low socioeconomic subgroup, defined as students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals. In the 2005-2006 school year, 64% of students in the subgroup were proficient. In the 2011-2012 school year, 90% of students in the subgroup were proficient. The special education subgroup demonstrated a trend toward positive growth in student achievement with 74% proficient on the MCA in 2008 and 92% proficient in 2012.

#### Reading

The data tables contain MCA results for Bendix Elementary third and fourth grade students. The trend data shows a consistent level of exceptionally high student achievement and as well as a slight increase in student achievement. In the 2007-2008 school year, 87% of the students were proficient. Consecutive years' results were 90.3%, 85%, and 91.7% proficient. In school year 2011-2012, 92.1% of the students scored at the proficient or exceeds proficiency level. The two subgroups represented at Bendix Elementary School are free and reduced priced lunch and special education. Other subgroups have too few students to comprise the needed cell size. The free and reduced price meals subgroup followed the same trend line as the grade level as a whole. There is a small achievement gap between students qualifying for poverty and the remaining student body. Yet, in school year 2008-2009, 95% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch attained proficiency or exceeds proficiency on the MCA. The subgroup outperformed the total tested students' achievement. The special education population has shown a trend toward increased proficiency. In 2008, 60.7% of students receiving special education attained proficiency on the MCA. In 2012, 84.7 of the subgroup attained proficiency.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

A. Bendix Elementary strives to meet the needs of all students via informed decision making based on data. Data is collected from MCA II, MCA III, NWEA MAP testing, Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarks, and curriculum assessments to interpret strengths and areas of improvement for the grade level curriculum as well as each individual student.

Data collection and analysis occurs several times during the school year. During fall workshop, the Bendix Elementary staff critiques achievement progress and instruction. Curriculum specific committees spend considerable time discussing curriculum issues that arise from analysis of data and planning paralleled staff development opportunities. Problem-solving teams are the foundation of a school-wide professional learning community.

Student assessment data is used to determine eligibility for and effectiveness of Targeted Services programs, such as all-day kindergarten programming, after school reading programs, and summer school. Targeted services programs are supplemental learning opportunities for small group instruction focusing on reading and math.

MCA II and MCA III data has been utilized to align the curriculum with the Minnesota state standards and to make curriculum modifications. Each test strand was studied and areas that needed additional curriculum and learning were identified. This was accomplished through grade level meetings and literacy and math committees. These committees were created with members from each grade level to allow a broad spectrum look at the data to assess where the building had common weaknesses and strengths.

The NWEA MAP assessment is taken by the students in the fall, winter, and spring. The results allow for a more comprehensive look at a student's needs when used with other data. Teachers are then able to custom fit the curriculum to students by creating appropriate groupings based on the strand weaknesses and strengths. Each grade level is provided time to accurately assess both the data from the MCA II, MCA III, and MAP scores and make adjustments to the curriculum.

Teachers at Bendix Elementary assess students quarterly using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarks to determine a student's reading accuracy and comprehension level. This information is analyzed at grade level meetings and used by each teacher to choose appropriate book levels for guided reading. In addition, grade levels have identified "at grade level" text levels for each quarter to progress monitor and ensure students meet the Common Core Standards.

B. Strong communication has been imperative to sustaining a positive school-family relationship at Bendix Elementary School. The daily activities at Bendix Elementary and student performance highlights are published in weekly classroom newsletters and a monthly school newsletter. Student MCA results and MAP results are sent to parents with a letter explaining the purpose of the assessment and the meaning of the student's results. Classroom and standardized assessment results are discussed at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences. Parents are encouraged to contact school staff with questions they may have about testing and their child's results.

Assessment results are also communicated to students. Students are informed that assessment results are an indicator of the teacher's instruction and areas that are going well and what needs improvement. Each student makes personal goals for achievement gains on the MAP in the areas of reading and math and identifies steps to accomplish the goal. Intermediate grade students formalize their goals in written form. Student progress toward their goals is communicated. Each spring an all school meeting is held to celebrate Bendix Elementary's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) results.

The elementary principal and representative teachers present assessment results at School Board meetings throughout the school year. Standardized assessment results are published in the local newspaper, The Annandale Advocate. A link to the school's MCA results is found on the building's website.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Teachers from area schools have visited Bendix Elementary for a range of reasons. One school visited a math lesson in each grade level (kindergarten through fourth) to observe various instructional styles and approaches. Another school visited to observe the use of a literature coordinator in the media center and

how the position promoted academic achievement. A third school sent a team of teachers and principal to discuss the professional learning community efforts at Bendix Elementary School and other factors contributed to high student standardized achievement results.

Bendix Elementary hosted a free Saturday literacy professional development opportunity for teachers throughout the state. As part of this event, Bendix Elementary teachers volunteered to organize a one hour presentation focused on a successful instructional reading strategy. Professional development session topics varied from using a SMART board in literacy instruction to implementing book clubs in a fourth grade classroom. Registration numbers were high and many of the sessions filled quickly. Over 100 area teachers attended the free literacy professional development opportunity.

Bendix Elementary teachers have published articles in Education Minnesota newsletters, state and national kindergarten association publications, and Mailbox journals. In addition, teachers have presented instructional methods at state and national conferences (i.e., kindergarten and SMART boards and using student names to gain alphabetic knowledge).

Bendix Elementary teachers have partnered with area universities, St. Cloud State University and St. Ben's University, to provide student teaching placements and practicum placements. While college level students are fulfilling their placements at Bendix Elementary, they are invited and encouraged to visit other classrooms, observe Title I intervention programs, and observe Reading Recovery lessons.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Bendix Elementary School staff members, families, and community members have extended efforts to support student success and school improvement. The Parent Staff Advisory Committee is comprised of teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents. The group serves as a site council providing feedback and guidance in the daily activities and experiences at Bendix Elementary. Approximately six years ago, a group of elementary parents joined forces and formed the first Bendix Elementary Parent Teacher Organization. The P.T.O. has played a critical role in establishing Bendix Elementary as a community hub through activities such as Back-to-School Bingo, Monster Mash, Children's Holiday Market, Boogie Bop, and Drop Off Movie Night.

Traditional special events aimed at engaging parents, families, and community members in students' educational experience include: Open House – an August evening to tour the building, meet the teachers, and gather back-to-school information, Pastries for Parents – a fall morning when parents are invited to share breakfast with their child and have their child show them around the room, Arts & Academics – students' highlight their musical, artistic, and academic skills, Math Nights – families play math games using school manipulatives, Family Reading Nights – families participate in literacy events in their child's classroom and the media center, and Music Concerts – each spring grade levels exhibit the skills they learned throughout the year in music class.

Bendix Elementary School is fortunate to have a strong relationship with an active Community Education Program that offers students and families a wide range of learning activities as an extension of the school day. Students can participate in after school programs that include foreign languages, science topics, visual arts, athletics, and a day care experience.

Numerous elementary staff members are active members of community service organizations such as the Annandale Kiwanis, Youth First, Heart of the Lakes Triathlon (H.O.L.T.) and the Annandale Food Shelf. These organizations have positively impacted students' school experience:

- Large all-day kindergarten scholarship donations
- Donated funds for purchasing mentor texts for literacy lessons

- Raised funds and donated their time to restore the elementary playground
- Organized a Big Brother/Big Sister program that matches an elementary student with a high school student,
- Funded national authors to travel and present at Bendix Elementary
- Provided snacks for students during the school day who were financially unable to bring snack from home

## **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Curriculum:**

The core academic areas' curricula are continuously analyzed in comparison to the Minnesota State Standards. Teachers have a clear understanding of the correlation between curriculum materials and the standards. Teachers supplement instruction to meet standards when needed.

The scope and sequence of the reading curriculum is provided by a Houghton Mifflin reading series. Teachers use the reader's workshop pedagogy to deliver instruction. Leveled texts using the Fountas & Pinnell leveling system are used for small group skill lessons and guided reading lessons. The Rebecca Sitton high frequency word list is an added component to student learning.

Writing instruction is primarily based off the work of Lucy Calkins. The curriculum includes the genres prescribed in the Houghton Mifflin curriculum and are expanded with the Units of Study. Each grade level has approximately six genres of writing that are taught each year. The writing block begins with a focused mini-lesson, students move to independent writing while the teacher confers with students, and the lesson ends with a group share.

Everyday Math is the curriculum series used in mathematics. A daily lesson consists of a short teacher led presentation, guided practice as a class or in partners, and independent work. Daily lessons are supplemented with additional algorithm and fact practice.

Students are instructed using the Nystrom social studies curriculum. The focus of the curriculum is map skills. Fourth grade students study the regions of the United States with the support of a textbook, video, and web resources. Grade levels supplement the social studies curriculum with cultural awareness instruction that includes holidays around the world, African American history, and realistic historical fiction studies.

Bendix Elementary adopted the FOSS Science curriculum. The primary learning model is hands-on small group. Assessments measure students' abilities to explain science concepts and make inferences based on their science knowledge. Concepts are supplemented with nonfiction books.

Students are engaged in five health units throughout the year. Bendix Elementary adopted The Great Body Shop curriculum. Lessons include a variety of learning experiences including teacher led, class discussion, reenactments, and a student handout that goes home at the end of the unit. Students participate in developmentally appropriate physical education lessons every other day for approximately 45 minutes.

The art curriculum at Bendix Elementary correlates to the National standards for visual arts education. The main focus of the art curriculum for kindergarten through fourth grade is the ability to identify the elements of visual art including color, line, shape, texture and space. In many of the grades we also focus on the principles of design including pattern, repetition, emphasis, balance, contrast and movement. The students are exposed to a wide range of artists and art from around the world.

The music curriculum of Bendix Elementary is an integral part to help promote well-rounded learners. A Kodály inspired method of teaching music is implemented to create joyful, tuneful and beautiful musicians and addresses all of the National Education Music Standards. Musicians in the music room are consistently engaged with experiencing music through singing folk songs, active listening, movement, instrumentation and composition. The Kodály method experienced by Bendix learners improves their intonation, rhythm skills, and music literacy.

Technology instruction is integrated throughout all core curriculum areas. Students gain skills in technology use, on-line research, presentation creation, and keyboarding. The primary use of technology is as a tool that supports student meeting grade level proficiency on the Minnesota State Standards.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Bendix Elementary School has implemented research based literacy pedagogy and basal curriculum. Bendix Elementary School adopted the Houghton Mifflin (2005) reading series as the “backbone” of our curriculum. The basal series provides a scope and sequence for reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reciprocal teaching is the strategy used to teach comprehension.

Reading instruction follows a gradual release of responsibility pedagogy. Skill acquisition begins with strong teacher support and moves to low teacher support. A typical reading lesson begins with a skill being introduced or reviewed in a mini-lesson. Next, students read independently or in a guided reading group. The lesson finishes with a class share comprised of students giving examples of the skill in their text.

Components of the reading instructional block include:

Read aloud – teacher reads aloud to the whole class, a variety of genres and diverse societies are represented

Shared reading – enlarged text that all children can see, children are involved with the reading (big books, poetry, songs)

Guided reading – teacher works with a small group of students with similar reading skills

Independent reading – children read on their own or with partners, books are at their reading level

Literature circles – small groups of students reading the same book, students read portions of the text and have discussion that is focused on comprehension

A leveled book room contains multiple copies of titles from a variety of genres. Carefully selected texts at students’ instructional level are used in guided reading groups to scaffold learning. Leveled books are used during guided reading, independent reading, and brought home for successful at-home reading.

Student skill acquisition is monitored via anecdotal records from student-teacher reading conferences and guided reading groups. Formative assessments such as running records and Houghton Mifflin skills tests provide data that drives instruction. Summative assessments such as Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, Measures of Academic Progress, and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments are valuable tools in ensuring students transfer skills to multiple contexts and settings.

In addition to differentiated instruction within the classroom, students reading below grade level receive an additional 30 minutes of literacy instruction to boost their achievement. The pull-out programming consists of an array of research based options that includes Reading Recovery, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Phonics, Early Success, and Soar to Success.

Students reading above grade level are supported with leveled texts within the classroom. A Gifted and Talented Coordinator provides resources for classroom teachers and pull-out programming for students qualifying for services.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Bendix Elementary School has implemented research based math pedagogy and curriculum. Bendix Elementary School adopted the Everyday Mathematics (2007) series as the school's core curriculum. The curriculum focuses on student understanding of math concepts, contrary to traditional math programs focused on fact memorization and repeated, isolated algorithm problems. Bendix Elementary students don't ask the question, "Why do I have to learn this?" because the curriculum introduces skills in application to daily living. Student learning experiences are supported with manipulatives providing hands-on learning. SMART boards are instructional tools increasing student engagement and learning tools allowing students to interact with objects.

Skill acquisition is monitored on daily work, curriculum unit assessments, and grade level constructed quarter assessments. Students having difficulty learning skills are supported with an additional 30 minutes of math each day. This time is an intense focus on the skills expected to be secure at that grade level. The intent of the additional instruction and practice is for students to close the achievement gap with their peers.

Students performing above grade level are supported with extensions and alternate assignments within the classroom. A Gifted and Talented Coordinator provides resources for classroom teachers and pull-out programming for students qualifying for services.

Students complete a math home-link each night. The home-link reviews skills the students have been learning in the classroom. The home-link serves two purposes: 1) a communication tool from school to home highlighting math skills focused on during the school day. 2) Extra practice on skills such as algorithm problems.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Bendix Elementary adopted the FOSS (Full Option Science Systems) curriculum for grades kindergarten through fourth grade. The FOSS program bridges research and practice by providing strategies and tools to engage students in learning experiences that lead to deeper understanding of the designed and natural worlds. The primary learning model is hands-on, small group. Students participate in active and collaborative scientific practices.

Experiences out of the classroom develop awareness of the community. A great deal of student learning occurs outdoors. Students develop a relationship with nature as they interact with outdoor trees, shrubs, weeds, and the sky. This relationship elicits students caring for these systems.

Science concepts and literacy skills are integrated. Science concepts are supplemented with nonfiction books. Conventions of nonfiction text are explicitly taught in context of science topics to support application and understanding of table of contents, photographs, captions, and index.

Assessments measure students' abilities to explain science concepts and make inferences based on their science knowledge. Formative assessments help create a strong classroom community of support, trust, respect, and collaboration. The classroom community's goal is for all members to demonstrate progress, learn, and grow.

Through science lessons, students gain skills, knowledge and behaviors that lead to fulfilling the school's mission of "making a positive and dynamic impact on our world." Understanding core scientific knowledge and how science functions is essential for citizenship. Students learn important scientific and engineering concepts and develop the ability to think well via active participation in scientific practices. Our students gain new knowledge through discovery. In our world, engineers apply content knowledge and science practices to solve real-world problems.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Bendix Elementary systematically tracks student progress in math and reading to ensure student instruction is at their learning level and scaffolds students to higher achievement. A variety of formative assessments and summative assessments direct teacher and support staff teaching to meet student needs. Within the classroom setting, small group instruction is conducted to reteach skills. In addition, teachers used leveled books for guided reading lessons and independent reading. Technology is a valuable asset in differentiated instruction through programs such as Study Island and individualized websites such as South Washington County School District's MAP strand options by RIT.

Third grade students participate in Power Math. Students are grouped according to their math MAP results. These groups meet once a week and are engaged in lessons specific to their instructional level. Some students receive extra practice on grade level skills while other students are instructed on more rigorous math concepts.

Students not meeting grade level expectations in reading participate in a 30 minute a day intervention. At each grade level these students are grouped according to skill level. In reading, students may have 30 minutes of Reading Recovery, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Early Success/Soar to Success, Fountas & Pinnell's Phonics/Word Study, or an additional guided reading lesson. Students not meeting grade level expectations in math participate in a 30 minute a day intervention titled Math Magic. The focus of the intervention is based on student needs and the expected mastered skills at that grade level.

A variety of Targeted Service programs are implemented during the third quarter of the school year. These programs are extensions of the students' school day. Half-day kindergarten students not attaining the literacy skills needed for first grade have the opportunity to attend school all day. The other half of the day is focused on reading skill acquisition. First grade and second grade have Reading Club after school. During Reading Club the teacher shares a read aloud and students participate in a guided reading group and interact with a literacy SMART board activity.

In addition to the challenging learning opportunities offered in the classroom, high achieving students receive 60 minutes of a gifted math program two times a week and/or 90 minutes of a gifted reading program one day a week. Each of these pull-out opportunities use award winning curricula.

## **6. Professional Development:**

The professional development program at Bendix Elementary School is established by Team Leaders, the school's leadership team. The leadership team identifies areas of need and determines the amount of funding to be allotted to each area. Team Leaders use student achievement data and Minnesota Department of Education guidelines as resources. The majority of the professional development funds go toward implementing the school's literacy committee initiative.

The literacy committee's efforts started with establishing a literacy research based framework for reading. After multiple years dedicated to reader's workshop implementation, the school's focus progressed to a school-wide implementation of writer's workshop. A summary of the professional development plan includes:

- Teacher release time (substitutes) for the administration of assessments and grade level discussion and analysis of assessment results;
- Monthly cross grade level professional book club meetings centered on writing instruction;
- Monthly grade level meetings that include discussion on beliefs about teaching writing and reflection on classroom writing instruction;
- Monthly grade level meetings focused on discussing students at-risk for not meeting grade level expectations, interventions implemented, and possible other intervention ideas;



- Grade level collaboration establishing writer's workshop genres/units of study and mini-lessons or teaching points for each genre.

Additional efforts identified by Team Leaders include school visits to high performing schools, establishing a scope and sequence for gifted math students, and on-line professional memberships.

Bendix Elementary School teachers participate in Q-Comp, an intense professional development initiative often cited as pay for performance. Q-comp requires team collaboration, peer observations, and increased student achievement.

The professional development efforts have improved the quality of teacher instruction and resulted in higher levels of student achievement. In 2003, 66% of Bendix Elementary third grade students were proficient on the MCA Reading. In 2012, 92% of Bendix Elementary third graders were proficient on the MCA Reading. In 2003, 65% of Bendix Elementary third grade students were proficient on the MCA Math. In 2012, 93% of Bendix Elementary third graders were proficient on the MCA Math.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The leadership structure at Bendix Elementary School is a hybrid of transformational leadership and shared instructional leadership. Leadership at Bendix Elementary involves active collaboration of the principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The principal pursues teachers' insights and expertise and works with teachers for school improvement. For example, a math committee comprised of teachers from each grade level and department studied students' standardized assessment results. The committee identified the students' weakest performing strand (number sense), brought these findings to their grade level/department, and developed strategies to address the strand. Ideas included fact quizzes and grade level algorithm competitions. The impact of the implemented efforts is continuously monitored on standardized test results.

At Bendix Elementary the principal is less an assessor of teacher proficiency and more a catalyst of teacher growth. The principal promotes teacher reflection and professional growth. Each fall, grade levels and departments create SMART goals focused on math or reading. Grade levels monitor their progress throughout the year and have an end of year SMART goal conference with the principal. Typical grade level goals include students' MCA results, students' Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) growth, and students' reading levels.

Leadership emphasizes problem identification, problem solving, and collaboration with the objective of improving school performance as measured by student outcomes. Grade levels meet monthly to discuss students at-risk for not meeting grade level expectations. Teachers share student data and current interventions. Grade level peers brainstorm additional interventions aimed at meeting that student's needs. If students do not close the achievement gap with peers, the student is discussed with the Response to Intervention (RtI) Committee. The RtI Committee is a group of teachers with access to financial and paraprofessional support to release to students who would benefit. The RtI Committee requires weekly probes be administered to monitor the impact of the support and after six weeks the results of the services are discussed.

Bendix Elementary student achievement has risen significantly in the past ten years. A shared vision of improving instruction and meeting students' needs has been core to the school's success.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: MCA-II/III Math

Edition/Publication Year: MDE - each  
yr. new edition

Publisher: American Institute for Research 2012/Pearson  
Educational Measurement 2008-2011

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	95	93	92	93	95
% Exceeds the Standards	55	37	62	61	46
Number of students tested	108	111	125	125	137
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	5	3	2	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	4	2	1	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	92	88	86	92	97
% Exceeds the Standards	44	32	46	58	41
Number of students tested	38	36	39	24	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	95	100	81	78	88
% Exceeds the Standards	35	47	48	44	44
Number of students tested	20	20	21	18	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	95	94	93	94	95
% Exceeds the Standards	56	38	63	63	46
Number of students tested	106	105	117	116	131
<b>NOTES:</b>					
African American/Hispanic/ELL is CTSTR (count too small to report).					

13MN3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: MCA-II Reading

Edition/Publication Year: MDE - each  
yr. new edition

Publisher: American Institute for Research 2012/Pearson  
Educational Measurement 2008-2011

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	89	93	86	89	92
% Exceeds the Standards	66	68	62	67	68
Number of students tested	108	111	125	125	137
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	5	3	2	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	4	2	1	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	83	85	77	96	90
% Exceeds the Standards	61	68	51	58	48
Number of students tested	38	36	39	24	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	75	94	52	67	81
% Exceeds the Standards	45	61	33	39	69
Number of students tested	20	20	21	18	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	89	93	86	91	93
% Exceeds the Standards	66	70	63	69	69
Number of students tested	106	105	117	116	131
<b>NOTES:</b>					
African American/Hispanic/ELL is CTSTR (count too small to report).					

13MN3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: MCA II/III Math

Edition/Publication Year: MDE - each  
yr. new edition

Publisher: American Institute for Research 2012/Pearson  
Educational Measurement 2008-2011

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	94	88	91	94	87
% Exceeds the Standards	55	57	59	54	50
Number of students tested	112	133	133	140	121
Percent of total students tested	99	98	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	4	6	4	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	4	2	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	88	80	84	93	75
% Exceeds the Standards	31	53	39	43	25
Number of students tested	33	43	32	31	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	89	77	64	82	60
% Exceeds the Standards	39	50	24	46	40
Number of students tested	19	24	26	13	10
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	93	89	92	94	87
% Exceeds the Standards	56	58	60	56	51
Number of students tested	105	128	125	134	118
<b>NOTES:</b>					
African American/Hispanic/ELL students are CTSTR (Count too small to report)					

13MN3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: MCA-II Reading

Edition/Publication Year: MDE - each  
yr. new edition

Publisher: American Institute for Research 2012/Pearson  
Educational Measurement 2008-2011

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	96	91	85	91	82
% Exceeds the Standards	66	68	62	67	68
Number of students tested	112	135	133	140	121
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	5	6	4	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	4	2	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	91	83	65	93	68
% Exceeds the Standards	59	42	42	33	29
Number of students tested	33	43	32	31	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	94	78	44	73	40
% Exceeds the Standards	44	26	20	27	30
Number of students tested	19	24	26	13	10
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	0	0	0	0	0
% Exceeds the Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
% Meets/Exceeds	97	92	86	91	82
% Exceeds the Standards	61	50	62	57	58
Number of students tested	105	128	125	134	118
<b>NOTES:</b>					
African American/Hispanic/ELL is CTSTR (count too small to report).					

13MN3